

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



Michigan Chapter

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IMMUNIZATIONS – HEALTH POLICY COMMITTEE HEARING OCTOBER 10, 2013

- Immunization for communicable disease is the most significant public health achievement and has impacted mortality and morbidity rates not only in the United States but worldwide.
- Lowered vaccine rates due to vaccine refusal puts the public at great risk especially to vulnerable populations including young infants and children, children and adults with chronic disease, immunocompromised children and adults (cancer patients on chemotherapy and organ transplant recipients) and the elderly. Many physicians decline to offer their services to those who refuse vaccines as it puts these patients noted above at great risk. This is also a liability to physicians.
- Recent outbreaks in under immunized populations have occurred across the country including measles and pertussis. This creates pockets of disease with exposure to many others who cannot yet receive vaccines (newborns), have not completed entire immunization regimens (children under 5 years) and immunocompromised children and adults who cannot receive certain vaccines. Michigan's declining rates of vaccination put our children at greater risk than in many other states.
- Unimmunized and under immunized children pose greater clinical challenges in disease recognition resulting in treatment delays and exposure prophylaxis delays. This results in risk of increased number of cases of disease (e.g. Haemophilus Influenza meningitis, meningococcal sepsis and meningitis).
- Michigan ranks 4th in the United States for under immunization due to vaccine refusal. Michigan has 2 types of waivers: philosophical and religious. ¼ of refusals are for religious reasons. Michigan is only one of 20 states with such waivers. This results in decreased vaccine rates and increased risk of disease.
- Challenges to providing vaccinations include:
 - Cost to patients who may be uninsured or under insured
 - Vaccine cost and storage
 - Administrative time and cost to comply with all regulations
 - Time required to educate patients who are fearful of vaccines
 - Internet misinformation
 - Wakefield Study falsifying reports resulting in fears of autism following vaccines – proven to be untrue with loss of physician license and admission of bogus study. This resulted in wave of public fear and mistrust and subsequent vaccine refusal
 - Budget threats to funding of MCIR vaccine registry – invaluable to healthcare providers

- Promoting vaccines for adolescents – public perception that they are not at risk (e.g. HPV vaccine for prevention of cervical, penile and anal cancer and some genital warts – this is the only anti-cancer vaccine available to date)

THE MIAAP AND THE PHYSICIANS WE REPRESENT ALONG WITH OUR COLLEAGUES ARE COMMITTED TO IMPROVING PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY BY PROMOTING FULL VACCINATION OF ALL CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS. WE RECOMMEND AND SUPPORT ALL EFFORTS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION REGARDING THE SAFETY AND EFFICACY OF SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN IMMUNIZATION TO PREVENT DISEASE.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'J. Lia Gaggino', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

J. Lia Gaggino MD, FAAP
President Michigan Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics